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Department of State  
**Tennessee State Library and Archives**  
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**HULL, CORDELL**  
**(1871-1955)**  
**PAPERS**  
**1901-1932**

*Processed by:*

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## INTRODUCTION

The papers of Cordell Hull (1871-1955), U. S. Representative from Tennessee, 1907-1921 and 1923-1931; Chairman of the Democratic National Executive Committee, 1921-1924; U. S. Senator from Tennessee, 1931-1933; Secretary of State, 1933-1944; and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1945, span the years 1901-1932. Most of them, however, are dated during the period 1921-1932, with special concentrations in the election years 1928 and 1932.

The Cordell Hull Papers were obtained by the Manuscript Section of the Tennessee State Library and Archives on June 25, 1968, through the agency of Mr. E. G. Rogers, Pulaski, Tennessee.

The materials in this finding aid measure .84 linear feet. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Cordell Hull Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Cordell Hull Papers, containing approximately 750 items, span the period 1901-1932; most of them, however, fall in the years between 1921 and 1932 when Hull was particularly active in the national politics of the Democratic Party. Included in the collection are Hull's incoming correspondence; his outgoing correspondence; some miscellaneous correspondence; accounts; biographical data; legal documents; memorandums; newspaper clippings; copies of some of Hull's speeches; his voting record in the House of Representatives, 1919-1921; and some of his writings about issues in the campaign of 1928 and Tennessee politics.

The largest part of the collection, approximately 475 items, is composed of Cordell Hull's incoming correspondence, 1901-1932. During those years Hull corresponded with many prominent figures in Tennessee and national politics, people such as James B. Aswell, Warren Worth Bailey, Gordon Browning, Joseph W. Byrns, Ethel B. Childress, James Middleton Cox, Homer S. Cummings, Josephus Daniels, Edwin L. Davis, John W. Davis, Norman H. Davis, James A. Farley, Louis M. Howe, Jesse H. Jones, William Gibbs McAdoo, Daniel J. McGillicuddy, Kenneth McKellar, Andrew J. Montague, John J. Raskob, Daniel C. Roper, Jouett Shouse, and Frank William Taussig. Members of the Hull family whose letters are in this collection include his father, William Hull; his uncle, H. D. Hull, of Burrville, Tennessee; his uncle, J. R. Hull, of Armathwaite, Tennessee; and his cousins Corell and Charlotte Hull, of West Plains, Missouri. A complete index to Cordell Hull's incoming correspondence in this collection can be found in this register.

Of the letters in Hull's incoming correspondence, more are dated during 1928 than during any other one year. These letters contain a wealth of information about the national presidential contest between Alfred E. Smith and Herbert Hoover, including references to the anti-Catholic and prohibitionist propaganda circulated by Smith's rivals. Much of this material concerns the Hoover-Smith campaign in Tennessee, one of several Southern states which in 1928 went Republican for the first time since the Civil War. In addition to recording the political situation in various Tennessee counties, these letters give insight into the functioning of the Democratic Party in Tennessee during the campaign of 1928. Hull's incoming correspondence of 1928 also sheds light on his own campaign for reelection as the United States Representative from Tennessee's Fourth Congressional District.

Many of the letters among Hull's incoming correspondence were written in 1932 and primarily concern the campaign and election of that year. While some of them have to do with Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential campaign, the majority center on the gubernatorial fight in Tennessee. There is much information about the primary contest between Hill McAlister and Lewis S. Pope for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination; Pope's challenge of McAlister's victory; and the three-way contest between the Democratic McAlister, the Independent Pope, and the Republican candidate for the governorship.

Most of the remainder of Hull's incoming correspondence is dated in the fall of 1921 and consists of letters and telegrams congratulating him on his selection as Chairman of the Democratic National Executive Committee. Although many of these are only congratulatory in content, some do contain the author's views as to the state of the Democratic Party following its severe losses in 1920.

Almost all of Cordell Hull's outgoing correspondence in this collection was written in 1928. The topics of these letters include Democratic attempts to carry Tennessee for Al Smith and the entire Democratic ticket, political conditions in various Tennessee counties, the Democratic Party's payment of poll taxes for its registered voters, and Hull's possible presidential candidacy in 1928. But the central topic of Hull's outgoing correspondence is his own campaign for reelection to Congress in 1928. There are, in addition, a few letters written by Hull before 1928 and three written by him in 1932. Among those to whom he wrote between 1901 and 1932 were Woodrow Wilson, Bernard M. Baruch, James M. Cox, Homer S. Cummings, William Gibbs McAdoo, Benton McMillin, Joseph W. Byrns, Gordon Browning, Tom A. Henderson, Jesse H. Jones, Ewin L. Davis, Alben W. Barkley, and Louis M. Howe.

In this collection there is one folder of miscellaneous correspondence containing twenty letters written during the years 1903-1968. Major subjects covered in this correspondence are the campaign of 1928 in Tennessee, the campaign of 1932, the McAlister-Pope contest, the anti-dumping clause of the Hawley-Smoot Tariff, and recommendations of various persons for appointments. An index in this register gives a complete list of all authors and recipients.

Other items relating specifically to the political career of Cordell Hull are his Congressional voting record, typed copies of six of his speeches, and typed copies of some of his writings about the campaign issues of the election of 1928. The six speeches cover a range of topics, among them the income tax, tax revision, tariff reform, foundations of Democratic success in 1928, the Hawley-Smoot Tariff bill, and the Republican administrations from Harding through Hoover. In his writings on the campaign of 1928, Hull discusses the issues of United States foreign policy in regard to Latin America, Prohibition, and the failures of the Republican administrations during the 1920s.

Additional items in the collection are accounts, mostly canceled checks and statements, of Cordell Hull from 1909 through 1932; several memorandums, including copies of the Bounty Acts passed during the Civil War and two releases from the Bureau of Publicity of the National Democratic Committee; a copy of a bill of sale recording the transfer of a farm in Fentress County, Tennessee; some miscellaneous writings about Tennessee politics; and two newspaper clippings relating to financial matters in 1932 and the Glass Bill.

In the biographical data there are two newspaper clippings, one about Mrs. Sam A. Kendall and the other about Fay W. Brabson, along with several clippings about the life and career of Hull himself. Two typed manuscripts give data about Hull and the Hull family. One contains a description of the Hull birthplace and genealogical material about

Cordell Hull 's forebears. The other consists of reminiscences by older citizens of Carthage and Smith County in which they comment on Hull 's presidential ambitions during the 1920s; his near break with the New Deal; his diplomacy at the Pan American Conference; his "isolationism"; and his world trade agreements. In another typed manuscript, Hull castigates Luke Lea, U. S. Senator from Tennessee and founder of the Nashville *Tennessean*, for his attacks on Hull in the *Tennessean and American* .

The Cordell Hull papers in this collection are, therefore, not only a good source for a study of the life and career of Hull alone, but also for a study of the prominent figures in both Tennessee and national politics with whom he associated. These papers also shed light on the political backdrop from 1921 until 1932 against which such men as Cordell Hull conducted their own and the nation's affairs.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

### **Cordell Hull**

- 1871      October 2, born in Olympus, Overton (now Pickett) County, Tennessee
- 1890      Delegate to Tennessee State Democratic Convention
- 1891      Graduated from the law department of Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tennessee
- 1891      Admitted to the bar; commenced practice in Celina, Tennessee; law partner with Judge John J. Gore at Gainesboro, Tennessee
- 1893-1897    Member of the Tennessee House of Representatives
- 1898      During the Spanish-American War served as captain in the Fourth Regiment, Tennessee Volunteer Infantry
- 1903-1906    Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit of Tennessee
- 1907-1921    Served as a Democrat in the 60<sup>th</sup> through 66<sup>th</sup> Congresses (March 4, 1907-March 3, 1921)
- 1917      November 24, married Rose Frances (Witz) Whitney of Staunton, Virginia
- 1920      Unsuccessful candidate for reelection to the 67<sup>th</sup> Congress
- 1921-1924    Chairman of the Democratic National Executive Committee
- 1923-1931    Served as Democratic Representative in the 68<sup>th</sup> through 71<sup>st</sup> Congresses (March 4, 1923-March 3, 1931)
- 1930      Elected to the United States Senate; served from March 4, 1931, to March 3, 1933
- 1933      March 4, appointed Secretary of State by Franklin D. Roosevelt; served longer than any other Secretary of State in U. S. history

- 1933-1944 As Secretary of State, Hull negotiated reciprocal trade agreements; was author of the “ Good Neighbor” policy; and played a major role in the preliminary work which led to the establishment of the United Nations
- 1944 December 1, resigned as Secretary of State; resided in Washington, D. C., until his death
- 1945 Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in helping establish the United Nations
- 1955 July 23, died in the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland; interment in the Central Burial Vault of the Chapel of St. Joseph of Arimathea in the National Cathedral, Washington, D. C.

Sources: *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961*  
*Tennessee Blue Book, 1965-1966*

## CONTAINER LIST

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1. Correspondence – Incoming – Hull, Cordell – Knight-McKenzie
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14. Speeches — Hull, Cordell – re: Tariffs, taxes, etc.
15. Voting Record – Hull, Cordell – House of Representatives, 1919-1921
16. Writings – re: Campaign issues of national election, 1928
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